

Elite's recomposition and state-building in contemporary Brazil (1920-1964)

Garcia, Afranio

Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version
Zeitschriftenartikel / journal article

Zur Verfügung gestellt in Kooperation mit / provided in cooperation with:
GESIS - Leibniz-Institut für Sozialwissenschaften

Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Garcia, A. (2008). Elite's recomposition and state-building in contemporary Brazil (1920-1964). *Historical Social Research*, 33(2), 296-312. <https://doi.org/10.12759/hsr.33.2008.2.296-312>

Nutzungsbedingungen:

Dieser Text wird unter einer CC BY Lizenz (Namensnennung) zur Verfügung gestellt. Nähere Auskünfte zu den CC-Lizenzen finden Sie hier:
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/deed.de>

Terms of use:

This document is made available under a CC BY Licence (Attribution). For more Information see:
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>

Elite's Recomposition and State-Building in Contemporary Brazil (1920-1964)

*Afrânio Garcia**

Abstract: Brazil today is considered, on the international scene, as an “emerging nation”, doted with an integrated industrial complex, as well as on a modern system of education and research and on means of communication (telephone, radio, television, internet, etc.) which permit the rapid and efficient circulation of information. None of these characteristics would have been valid prior to 1930, when the country presented an economy dominated by the exportation of tropical products, political power was fragmented into more than twenty federal units with no real coordination by the central government installed in Rio de Janeiro, intellectual life was restricted to a few old exportation ports. – This paper aims at a better understanding of how Brazil transformed itself during the 20th century, from a structured archipelago around “islands” of agro-industrial plantations (coffee, sugarcane, etc.) to a “continent” marked by fast industrialization. Beside these evolutive perceptions of Brazil's space, we must take into account the social and intellectual courses of the key leaders during the 1930's uprising, such as Juarez Távora and José Américo de Almeida from the North, or Getúlio Vargas and Osvaldo Aranha from the South, the most significant figures of the national movement. – All these leaders come from the same social background of agrarian elites, but they had established political parties supporting very different ideologies, from nationalism to the acknowledgement of the US hegemony, from the labour party to liberalism. The paths of these elites show fairly well the diverse alternatives which have marked state-building and nation-building in contemporary Brazil.

Brazil today is considered, on the international scene, an “emerging nation”, doted with an integrated industrial complex which depends on renewable and non-renewable (alcohol carburant and petroleum) sources of energy, as well as on a modern system of education and research and on means of communication (telephone, radio, television, internet, etc.) which permit the rapid and efficient circulation of information. None of these characteristics would have been valid prior to 1930, when the country presented an economy dominated by the exportation of tropical products, political power was fragmented into more than twenty federal units with no real coordination by the central government installed in Rio de Janeiro, intellectual life was restricted to a few old exportation ports, which also accumulated religious, administrative and judiciary functions.

* Address all communications to: Afrânio Garcia, Centre de Recherches sur le Brésil Contemporain, Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, 54 Bd Raspail, 75006 Paris, France; e-mail: garcia@ehess.fr.

Crops such as coffee, sugar cane, cotton, rubber, cocoa and tobacco accounted for more than 85 % of the Brazilian exportations, a position it had occupied since the first half of the 19th century (see P. Eisenberg, 1977, portrait 1, p. 31). The physical space and the social power were concentrated in the hands of the great landowners who targeted international markets, particularly Europe and the United States of America; the rural world was the *modus vivendi* of the majority of the population; even in as late as 1940, 70 % of the population resided there. The segmentation of the national territory into different regions, more geared towards the exportation port than interlinked by means of transportation and long-distance communication networks, gave rise to the perception of the national territory as being like an “archipelago”, whose islands were constituted by areas of different crops or of mining, as opposed to the same space, structured by independent economic, political and cultural activities, thereby seen as one “continent” (H. Théry, 2000). The construction of a national State and economy is the work of the 20th century, mainly after 1930. Even the image of “Brazil, land of the future” was formulated by Stefan Zweig in a book published in 1941; a good testimony of the transformations that had begun to occur.

Contrary to the beginning of the 20th century, the second half of the same undergoes a dislocation of residences from the countryside to the cities; 70 % of the population, already in 1980, is situated in the urban complex and in 2000, practically 80 % is installed therein. As a result of the accelerated industrialization between 1930 and 1980, the dynamic center of the economy and the social, cultural and political powers locate themselves in the great metropolises, with the restructuring of the national State and the expansion of its activities, with the creation of the universities and the structuring of the education systems on a national basis, with the formation of political parties and associative movements on a national scale. A veritable social mutation occurred in the 20th century: there was roughly a tenfold multiplication of the population and a hundredfold multiplication of the GDP. But the hierarchy and the inequality implanted from the beginning of the Portuguese colonization in the 16th century did not diminish with the advent of the accelerated industrialization and urban growth; the social distances between descendants of masters and descendants of slaves tended indeed to deepen and imprint their marks to this day in the spatial segregations of the metropolises.

In 1930, the crisis initiated by the New York Stock Exchange crash in 1929 also had profound effects, but did not engender massive unemployment, nor did it completely disarticulate the economy, as it did in a number of European countries; the defense of the income of plantation owners, which culminated in the State-financed destruction of the stores of coffee kindled industrial growth based on the import substitution. On the other hand, it was not the power of the largest coffee-producing state—São Paulo—which promoted a policy which aimed at protecting the great plantation and which would also benefit the new

industrialists. In October, 1930, an armed uprising, commanded by agrarian elites of the states of lesser strength interrupted the somewhat exclusivist hegemony of the oligarchies in São Paulo over the federal power. The unprecedented centralization of the Brazilian State, accompanied by the expansion of its activities (education, collective health, labor legislation, infrastructural works in the sector of transportation and energy generation, etc.) was the fruit of the labor of the descendants of the agrarian elites from states of secondary weight in the Federation to transcend the limits imposed by the hegemonic state—São Paulo—since the foundation of the Republic in 1889. The analysis of the biographies and the political activities of the leaders of the revolution of 1930, all descendants of the agrarian elite but having diversified interests in function of the products being cultivated and the profile of their regions of origin, should permit one to study the contribution of this recomposition of leaders to the reorganization of the public space and to understand the diversification of the political elites upon the confirmation of the national State. Born in less influential states in the republic proclaimed in 1889, they were not destined to occupy top positions on the federal level, especially because they had descended from great landowner families in decline. On the other hand, belonging to political factions initially marked by strong antagonism, their political alliance aiming at armed confrontation was not by any chance a fatality. After reaching federal power, a very reduced number of leaders, such as the supreme chief of 1930—Getúlio Vargas—or his right arm, Oswaldo Aranha, the military leader of the uprising in the North, Juarez Távora, and the civilian leader of this region, José Américo de Almeida, is present at every decisive instant of the political crises up to 1964, when high-ranking military men unleashed a coup, installing a dictatorship which would last until 1985. Getúlio Vargas occupied in various forms the position of President for almost twenty years and would be considered by historians as the principal figure of the republican period. The mode of access to central power of these descendants of agrarian elites and the diversification of national political currents in which they participated will be the main topics of this paper.

The wedding of a revolutionary hero: a political act?

Unleashed on October 3, 1930, simultaneously in Rio Grande do Sul, a state which borders on Uruguay, in Minas Gerais, in the middle west, and in Paraíba, a small state situated in the Northeast, the armed uprising had the objective of creating three foci of insurrection at extreme points in relation to the capital, Rio de Janeiro. Even before the arrival in Rio of Getúlio Vargas's troops, in less than one month, the president Washington Luiz had been stripped of his functions by the military commanders and the former president of the state of Rio Grande do Sul had arrived to assume control of the Federal state. Juarez Távora, military commander of the uprising in the north, who chose the day of

his thirty-third birthday, January 14, 1931, to get married, publishes in his memoirs a very unique picture of this ceremony¹.

Marriage of Juarez Távora



Since 1922, he had participated in the movements led by young officers of the Army to remove the elites from power, once they were seen as privatist, retrograde and impedimental to the functioning of the military corporation along modern lines; following this his life became limited to a succession of combats, prisons, spectacular escapes and periods of clandestine existence. Two and a half months after the revolutionary victory, he was finally able to marry his cousin and longtime bride. What could be more surprising about this wedding following traditional patterns—marriage to the daughter of the maternal uncle was frequent among his ascendants—gathering Getúlio Vargas, the new chief of the provisory government, his wife, the ministers of greatest prestige and their wives? Is it not strange that a photo, obtained at the home of his maternal uncle and father-in-law in Rio de Janeiro, where he had lived since the beginning of the century, be made without the presence of the bride and groom's family members, save the bishop who had celebrated the wedding, uncle of the bride and groom and brother of the owner of the house? This photo would have been impossible only six months earlier, as the groom lived clandestinely in the Northeast to escape from a search warrant issued by the police; it would thus have been unthinkable that he could publicly consort with provin-

¹ It is the only photo of this event which appears in his memoirs and which gives his wedding a political version cf. J. Távora (1975-1976).

cial authorities of the extreme South and North of the country, a general and one of the most brilliant professors at the Medical College in Rio. At the center of the photo, the bride is wearing a traditional dress for this occasion, accompanied with a bouquet of white flowers symbolizing her patient wait for the return of her cousin to public life; to her left the groom sports an army dress uniform, the same one the general responsible for the Ministry of War, who stands behind him, is wearing. This is the best proof of the conclusive change in the military situation of J. Távora, excluded from the rank and file of the Army following his rebellious actions in 1922. The presence of the commander in chief of the Army—every official must formally request the concession to get married—the sign of approval by the military corporation of the acts of Juarez Távora, considered thereafter as “heroic”?

Sitting in the right side of the bride: Getúlio Vargas, who had been the president of Rio Grande do Sul until the uprising of October 3 and had been a defeated candidate in the national presidential elections in March, 1930, but at the time of the photo was the head of the revolutionary government; to the left of the groom is Mrs. Vargas, descendant of wealthy cattle ranchers from the pampas as well as her husband. Behind G. Vargas is José Américo de Almeida, then Minister of Transportation and Public Works. Until October, 1930, he had only been the secretary of the governor of Paraíba. Elected federal representative in March, his mandate had been arbitrarily invalidated by the former authorities. His ingression in the revolutionary government, which assumed command of the federal capital, was due to an appointment by J. Távora. Certainly he had performed a fundamental role in the success of the armed revolt in Paraíba as commander of the police forces in the decisive moments of the uprising. In any case, the proximity between Juarez Távora and his groomsman during the religious ceremony was recent and directly connected to the revolutionary alliances.

Beside J. A. de Almeida is the Minister of War, general Leite de Castro, the bride's groomsman. He was one of the generals who deposed Washington Luiz, on 24 October, before the arrival of the Vargas troops in the capital. In comments of time, Leite de Castro was seen as a high officer wanting to perpetuate the previous military anarchy in central power without passing it to Vargas. Everything in the picture, even the seat of Mrs. Vargas, emphasizes the strict subordination of women to their husband. The groomsman's wives are flanked by the men, but distributed in inverse order: the wives to the left of the photo are those of the persons to the right of the lineup and vice-versa, as if to suggest the social unity of the participants. Behind Távora, one can observe Miguel Couto, professor of the College of Medicine of Rio and chairman of the National Academy of Medicine from 1914 to his death, and Osvaldo Aranha, Minister of Justice and to the right, the bishop D. Carloto Távora, uncle of the bride and groom. Osvaldo Aranha was Getúlio Vargas's secretary when the latter governed Rio Grande do Sul and had been responsible for all the prepara-

tions destined for the armed uprising; he was a right arm of sorts and, like Vargas, descended from a family of great cattle raisers of the South and had a Law degree². It is interesting to observe that, in addition to the presence of distinguished politicians, all the competencies acquired at higher education institutions are gathered, from military and polytechnical Schools to the catholic seminary, including the traditional colleges of Medicine and Law. It is also of note that the cultural powers are represented in all of their diversity, once there is a scientist, a celebrated novelist and a prelate attending the ceremony. It all seems as if there were a gathering of the symbols of temporal and spiritual power at that ceremony. It is noteworthy that the bishop transmitted a message from the pope blessing the new couple. This picture, as a historical document, is eloquent as a matter of fact; enough for us to point out the historical circumstances that made it possible and meaningful.

A few years later, this photo would become impossible: the alliance that it symbolized was broken off in the face of strong political divergencies of the protagonists: it is therefore a spur-of the moment register, and this photo says more about the politics of the day and the necessity to legitimize the new governing team than it does about the matrimony itself. What triggered the alliance among these individuals, who made a point of revealing their profound union by means of a religious ceremony in January, 1931? This ceremony was a more effective manner to reconstruct and make public an alliance than any other strictly political act, such as the founding of a new party, the publication of a manifest or a ministerial photo? In any case, the existence of this cliché suggests the necessity to deepen the reflection on the relationship between family and politics in Brazil, above all concerning the new elites responsible for the construction of the national State and the economic, social and cultural modernization of the country. From a specific point of view, we may ask ourselves how the new political responsibilities taken on by each person reflect on the other members of his or her family and try to understand why new political alliances are built, using family alliances as a metaphor.

The analysis of the social origins, the studies and the political careers of J. Távora and J. A. de Almeida, considered in 1930 the two principal leaders of the revolution in the North, confronted with the trajectories of Getúlio Vargas and Osvaldo Aranha allow us to search for the reasons for the intersection of these four trajectories and the fundamentals of this new governing circle, as well as to examine the work to obtain national recognition of their political authority. In light of this data, we can ask ourselves about the new structures of the central State which they helped to create and about the use of their national fame to influence the local powers where they had been born

² The Universities in Brazil, along with the colleges of philosophy, sciences and literature, were only to be created in the 1930's, particularly the University of São Paulo in 1934 and the University of the Federal District in 1935.

Blocked careers and revolutionary encounters

Both the leaders born in Rio Grande do Sul (G. Vargas and O. Aranha) and the northerners (J. Távora and J. A. de Almeida) are descendants of lineages of great landowners who had occupied political positions of their municipality or state of origin. The northerners were born inside the big farmhouses characteristic of the great properties, which reveals their more accentuated inclusion in the rural universe and lesser fortunes of their families as opposed to their southern counterparts who were born in small cities surrounded by farms exclusively for cattle-breeding in the extreme south of the country. This social origin differs from all those born in the large cities, in general old exportation ports still performing politicoadministrative and cultural functions, as was the case of Recife in the North, Rio de Janeiro, as the capital, or Porto Alegre in the South; the chances to follow long studies were even more linked to the economic and social capital of their families of origin. If all originate from large rural dominions situated in marginal regions, from the economic and political standpoint, their families occupied privileged positions on the local plane, where their power was based upon a large clientele of dependent peasants, known as “*moradores*” (residents) or aggregates, frequently composed of descendants of the old slaves (slavery was abolished in 1888). Even having come from families of relatively well-to-do gentlemen, to none of them was bestowed the function of heir of the land of their parents; such a liberty in relation to the inheritance led them early on to have a strong inclination towards studies, perceived as an indispensable means to having a political or top administrative career. If the study of Law attracted three out of four protagonists, as was the case of the major part of the political elites (cf. Joseph Love, 1971, 1980; Robert Levine, 1978); since the empire (1822-1889), the difficulties in financing the studies in the large cities led J. Távora to enroll in the Military Liceum and later in the Military School, which gave simultaneous access to the Polytechnical School; similar reasons led J. A. Almeida to enroll in the seminary before being able to study Law. These different school routes are directly associated with the modes of access to the political space and to the visions which were nurtured about necessary evolution. As we will see, their participation in the 1930 uprising is explained by the profound sentiment that their political, as well as their professional, careers were blocked by management of the State machine, exclusively centered on the economic and political interests of the coffee elites of São Paulo.

Starting by considering the leaders of the North, we may observe that J. A. Almeida had had an ascending career in the magistracy of his native state up to 1930, only ascending to the national political career after this date. It was the opposition between the interests of his state and the presidency of the Republic which manifested itself in the invalidation of his election as federal representative in March, 1930 and the assassination of João Pessoa in July, then President

of Paraíba, which provoked his adherence to the insurrection. Juarez Távora, as a military officer, was a member of the only corporation existent on a strictly national basis, as opposed to the magistrates, doctors, the police or the educators, employees of each particular state of the Federation. Unlike the other professions, the career of military officer required constant moving around, favoring a clearer awareness of the lack of national unity. On the other hand, the excess of subofficers impeded a rapid ascension in the career, increasing the discontent and generating successive uprisings from 1922 on. J. Távora opted for armed insurrection against the central power when he was an assistant professor at the Military School, which was common for the majority of his generation. The opposition between “legalists” and “revolutionaries” was crucial to maintain J. A. Almeida distant from J. Távora until 1930, as João Pessoa, J. A. Almeida’s boss, had in fact decided as judge of the Supreme Court on the punishment of Távora and his brothers in 1924 for their participation in the uprising of 1922. On the other hand, Getúlio Vargas initiated his promising career perfectly within the bounds of the political field of the First Republic. He becomes the President of Rio Grande do Sul in continuity of the former political boss and ascends to Finance Minister of Brazil during the term of the President he would depose with his uprising. He runs for the Presidency in the elections of March, 1930, on a ticket which included the President of Paraíba as vice-president, when he wishes to make it clear to the politicians of São Paulo that they were not acting in the best interests of the federation. He accepts the contact with young insurgent officers because of a common antagonism towards the central power. However, he only accepts to trigger the armed insurrection when João Pessoa is murdered in Recife on July 26, 1930. He interpreted this gesture as a personal affront and warning that the threat was valid for him and all his allies. As he had reached the peak of a state political career, any continuity on the national level had become totally blocked.

A closer examination of the biographies of the northerner leaders will permit the demonstration how no determinism generated the victorious insurrection of 1930, but once having arrived at the peak of the central power, said leaders would pursue in the affirmation of new public institutions as a manner to establish the access of the political elites of their states of origin to the benefits of the national State acts. In other words, said leading circles had great interest in redefining the competency of the national State and promoting opportunities for recomposition for regions which had been victims of economic decline and political ostracism.

A descendant of sugar mill and plantation landowners in a secondary state of the federation, a region of decline

J. Américo de Almeida was born in 1887, at a sugar mill and plantation complex in Paraíba, situated in the county of Areia, on the border between the

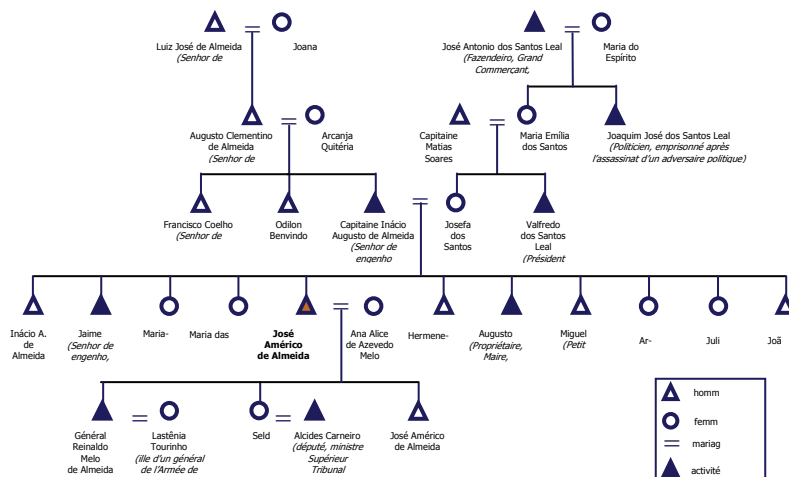
humid region where sugar cane is cultivated and the dryer regions, up to the semi-arid ones of the hinterland of the country. After his own words, he descends from a family of sugar mill and plantation complex landowners (“senhores de engenho”, cf. Camargo et. al., 1984 ed.: 78), which we can in fact observe in at least three generations, through his paternal and maternal ascendancy. The abolition of slavery in 1888 did not destroy the power of the great landowners. Their domination remained thanks to the absorption of a new type of labor, the *moradores*, the majority of which descends from slaves. Offering each family the means to guarantee its living, a house, a lot of land for subsistence farming, access to water and firewood (wilderness), but also organizing social and cultural activities, such as parties, religious practices, interpersonal exchanges of all kinds (including the familial life), the proprietors sought to root the workers within the physical space of the plantation (Garcia Jr.: 1989; Palmeira: 1976) Thus, they controlled their politicoeconomic clientele, limiting their social horizons. At the same time, the administration of the sugar mill and plantation complex provided them with the means necessary to participate in ways which excluded the residents from some of the activities that took place in the town. In any case, the existence of the family of sugar mill and plantation complex landowners entails not only the right to use an agri-industrial complex, but also control over a vast social clientele submitted to his orders. The end of slavery affected the authority of the landowners less than did the changes brought on by the competition in international sugar market.

Genealogy of José Américo de Almeida

Vice-Reis do Norte

Généalogie de JOSÉ AMÉRICO DE ALMEIDA

- Écrivain et homme politique -



J. A. de Almeida had written in his books that his father had liberated the slaves before the law was promulgated, but the sugar region knew a great economic decline, as is shown in the restructurings performed on the plantations to face the competition in the international markets. It is the era of the development of the first sugar mills signaling the shift to production on an industrial scale and the subordination of the old sugar mill and plantation complexes—thereafter reduced to the state of simple agricultural establishments, denominated “suppliers”. The concentration of power in the hands of the proprietors of the mills disqualified the former landowners of the sugar mill and plantation complexes which surrounded them. Some wished to continue using their sugar mill and plantation complexes to make sugar, but had to resign themselves to producing only one type of crude sugar (*rapadura*), exclusively destined for the internal market. This was the case of the landowners of Areia, and especially that of J. A. de Almeida’s father. However, this economic strategy could not contain the decline of these families. In addition, the coffee plantations in the Southeast had grown considerably and already represented 70% of the exportations by the end of the 19th century; the “coffee barons” of the Empire, located in the Southeast, had become the symbols of the wealth and prosperity of the large families. At the time of his birth, everything acted as a reminder that the title of masters of sugar cane mills (*senhores de engenho*) had lost the glories of the past and their position among the dominant elites. J. A. de Almeida lived on the sugar mill and plantation complex until he completed 8 years of age; there he learned to read and write and after that went to live with his paternal uncle, vicar of Areia, to continue his studies.

In 1899, his father passed away and the succession of the property only benefitted his older brother. As the disinherited youngest in the family, he was sent to the seminary. But, after provoking a familial conflict, contesting his mother and siblings decision, he was able to frequent a lyceum in the capital of the state and successfully enrolled in the Law College of Recife, a center which had educated the majority of the politicians of the North of Brazil since the independence (cf. Robert Levine, 1978). Graduating in 1908, after a short period as a prosecutor county of the semi-arid region, he was nominated at 24 years of age for a position in the high provincial magistracy, thanks to the power of his maternal uncle “Monsenior”³ Valfredo Leal, who had been the president of Paraíba from 1905 to 1908 and remained the political leader of a minority current in this state. He married a descendant of another family of sugar mill and plantation complex landowners of Areia, Ana Alice de Azevedo Melo, and the newlywed couple established residence in the capital of the state.

Thanks to a certain financial comfort, he was able to frequent literary circles since 1915. He began to publish as of 1921 with the support of the official

³ Ecclesiastical dignity not head of the diocese.

Press of Paraíba, where his novel, *A Bagaceira*, was published in 1928. It was about the arbitrary power exercised by a proprietor of a sugar mill and plantation complex of Areia over the inhabitants in his dominion, including a family of white landowners of the semi-arid region, who had been ruined by drought. Well-received by the principal literary critics of Rio, the book was reprinted twice in the same year by publishers in the capital and its author became the pioneer of the typically national novel, to the extent that his literary fame preceded his political celebrity.

Active member of the political faction of his maternal uncle, minority in this state then dominated by Eptácio Pessoa, who had been the president of Brazil from 1918 to 1922, he did not occupy a political position before 1928. On that date, he became secretary to João Pessoa, the new president of Paraíba and nephew of E. Pessoa: by means of the two nephews peace was established on the state level between the two rival factions. The Pessoa family enjoyed a certain political clout on the national level. The joining of circumstances relative to the succession of the presidency of the Brazilian Republic would make J. A. de Almeida heir to the political credit accrued on a national scale by the rival faction and permit his access to the highest posts of the Republic. Linda Lewin presented an accurate analysis of the family based political factions of Paraíba, specially the one controlled by Eptácio Pessoa (cf. Lewin, 1987). Indeed, since the establishment of the Republic, which in 1889 signaled the end of the empire and reign of the descendants of the Portuguese crown, the form of the federal State was essentially reduced to the juxtaposition of state political structures: each state enjoyed considerable autonomy, could form its own police forces, obtain foreign loans, collect taxes on exports, have its own magistracy and educational system, etc. In fact, the party system itself reinforced how things were in the federated states where the principal political mechanisms were located: there was only a Republican Party in Rio Grande do Sul or in São Paulo. There was no "Brazilian Republican Party"; national groups would only come into existence after the second war, in 1946. Literally, political negotiation was done between the "President" of each state of the Federation and the "President of the Republic of Brazil", installed in Rio de Janeiro. As their relative power depended on their economic activities, the richer states had at hand in this context an undeniable supremacy inside the Federation.

Since 1894, the elites of the states of São Paulo, which concentrated the most prosperous coffee plantations, and Minas Gerais, another coffee-producing state and former source of precious minerals, had formed a hegemonic union which took turns in exercising the presidency of the republic. The support of the central government for the policy conceived and practiced by São Paulo to control the supply of coffee and valorize it in the international markets was seen by the other states as a kind of exclusive dominion over the central State by São Paulo. This sentiment became accentuated when the president, linked to the São Paulo elite and who was stepping down from his position, designated

as a candidate to succeed him a man from the same state, thus infringing upon the tacit agreement of alternation, which in 1930 should have placed a person from Minas Gerais in the presidency. The elites of this state decided to support the candidacy of G. Vargas, then president of the state of Rio Grande do Sul; the candidate for the vice-presidency, J. Pessoa, president of the “small and good” Paraíba was chosen. The government of this state became the most fragile component of a coalition of forces opposing the central power controlled by the São Paulo elites.

In the beginning of 1930, there was an insurrection in a municipality of Paraíba against the government of J. Pessoa; the rebellion was stimulated and armed by the central government and its allies of the northern states. This attempt to destabilize a small state power by weapons was like a retaliation for the audacity of the lower-level elites, who had challenged the agrarian hegemonic elites on a national level. It was then that J. A. de Almeida and his ticket companions won by having accrued the largest number of votes in Paraíba, but last-minute modifications in the composition of the electoral commission allowed their opponents to proclaim competitors less voted as winners. J. A. de Almeida came to Rio to file a judicial recourse before the national assembly, but the parliament was completely submissive to the federal executive power. It was at this time that he established contact with young officers of the army in favor of the revolution and established closer ties with Juarez Távora, whose mission it was to prepare the uprising in the North.

As stated by J. A. Almeida himself, J. Pessoa was hostile to the revolutionary path and had been one of the judges responsible for the sentencing of the young officers who rebelled in 1922, some of which were J. Távora and his brothers. The alliance between the elites in power in Paraíba and the rebels was certainly not inevitable; it was more the result of an objective convergence of two forces whose interests opposed those of the central government. No military operation was put into motion before the assassination of J. Pessoa on July 26, 1930. The hesitations of G. Vargas to take up arms reveal the fact very well that his opposition intended above all to make the São Paulo elites understand that their domination was too exclusive; the decision for the uprising was only made after the physical elimination of the most fragile allied chief, which was seen as a direct threat to the honor of all the adversaries. The death of J. Pessoa put J. A. de Almeida in the foreground of the state scene: he became the responsible politician who could guarantee the success of the uprising, long aspired to, and prepared by, J. Távora.

Thanks to the success of the North's uprising, his military chief, Juarez Távora, named J.A. de Almeida as the civil authority responsible for all the national decisions concerning the northerner states of Brazil. Differing from the South, where Vargas assumed the command of the uprising, controlling all the military decisions and Osvaldo Aranha's movement, the civil power in the North was instituted by the military commander. The differences between the

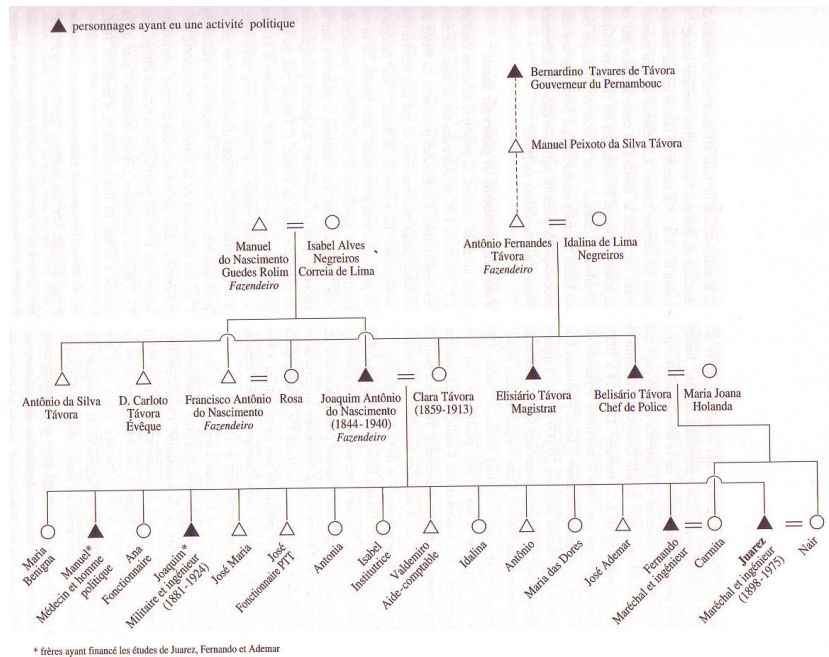
states of the Brazilian federation printed their marks on the new national governing circle.

Revolutionary calling and moral commitment after brother's death in combat

Juarez Távora was born in 1898, on a great property in the semi-arid region of Ceará, youngest brother in a family of fifteen siblings, descended on the paternal and maternal sides (see genealogy below) from families of cotton planters (culture associated with the breeding of animals), thus called *fazendeiros*. In this region, slavery had always been less important than on the sugar plantations, but the labor was also recruited along the same lines as the *moradores*. The decline of J. Távora's family was directly linked to the region's climate, which was frequently subject to drought. It is impressive to note that all the first-born sons tried to recompose themselves, be it with college studies in Rio, be it by migrating to the Amazon at the time of the rubber boom; in this way, the older facilitated the life of the three younger brothers so they could continue with their schooling. It is possible to observe this tendency towards re-composition through studies on the part of his mother's brothers, as well as that of his father-in-law, with a degree in Law, who held the post of Police chief of the federal capital. Thanks to the family support, the three youngest directly enrolled at the Pedro II high school, a model public secondary establishment. If in his reports, Távora said that he had been a poor student in Rio, it was certainly because he compared his status as a recent immigrant with the lifestyle of the great dominant families of the metropolis; however, the choice of his major at school clearly reveals the importance of the social capital of the family members who took them in and the priority given to the studies to obtain a place in a new social universe.

Since 1912, the high school studies of the two younger brothers, Juarez and Fernando, as well as their revolutionary engagements when they were young officers very much aware of the evolution of the career of one of the older brothers, Joaquim, polytechnician who became an officer in the Army. The youngest completed their high school studies at one of the great public schools in Rio Grande do Sul, accompanying Joaquim who was appointed professor at the military School. In 1915, Juarez and Fernando returned to Rio to participate in a public examination at the polytechnical School and the next year they enjoy the automatic enrollment of polytechnicians in the military School. The incorporation into the Army would permit them to finance their college educations. This choice forcedly brought on by economic necessity is once again resented by Juarez as a sign of the paucity of the family resources. New horizons opened up to them only because of the federal States support and the good use of family solidarities.

Genealogy of Juarez Távora



Généalogie de Juarez Távora (militaire et homme politique)

The comparison among their manners of managing their school investments, their travels throughout the Brazilian territory, with the trajectory of J. A. de Almeida emphasizes the provincial universe of this jurist and the national level of the recomposition strategies of the Távora. But what career perspectives were offered to those who consented in paying the price of a kind of permanent uprooting in the attempt to escape from the decadence which threatened the family?

The army was in a situation in which it could not guarantee normal promotion to all its young cadets finishing military schools. This career blocking provoked discontent among the officers of inferior category, above all the lieutenants, and was one of the causes of the military uprisings of the 1920's. In fact, it was not by chance that the number of rebellions was denominated the *Lieutenant Movement*. We point out the fact that the military schools took in many students from great landowning families threatened with decline because they guaranteed the financing of the studies and housing in the big capitals—a type of scholarship—and thus constituted a privileged path for the candidates to recomposition, while the Law and Medical colleges were frequented by students of higher origins. If we compare this with the trajectory of Vargas,

who also had studied at a school for military officers in his state of origin and had even enlisted in the troops guaranteeing the Brazilian frontiers in the Amazon, we can see that the final option for law was directly associated to the chances for success in a state political career.

First in his promotion in 1919, Juarez Távora became a member of the team of Army engineers and after initiating in the province was appointed to the position of professor at the Military School in Rio in 1922, where he succeeded Luiz Carlos Prestes, another brilliant student and leader of the uprisings of the 1920's who would become the general secretary of the Brazilian Communist Party from 1930 to the 80's. Due to the publication in the capital's press of private letters attributed to the candidate to the presidency of the Republic in 1922, considered to be an insult to the Army, a crisis aggravated by the closing of the military Club and the arrest of the field marshal and ex-president of Brazil, triggered the uprising on July 5, 1922, in which the Military School played a relevant part. The responsible officer on this date, Juarez, participated actively in this revolt which ended in failure and with his arrest, as well as that of his brother Joaquim, leader of the conspiracy in the distant state of Mato Grosso. They were only freed in 1923, without being judged: in view of the risk of being excluded from the Army by the courts, they made the decision to desert and organize new conspiracies to defeat the central power, with the complicity of young officers who remained in their positions. The fate of the two brothers was not the same; while Joaquim's engagement cost him his life, Juarez became a sort of national hero after the victory of 1930 and ended his career as a Marshal. Joaquim was one of the leaders of the uprising of July, 1924, which managed to take control of São Paulo, who died following the combats against legalist forces trying to take back the city. Juarez participated in the organization of the retreat of the rebel forces which had followed those of Rio Grande do Sul under the command of Luiz Carlos Prestes in the direction of the extreme south of the country.

From 1924 to 1927 these troops travelled through Brazilian territory from south to north to return to their initial positions, covering approximately 20,000 kilometers, escaping time and again from the retrenchment by the forces loyal to the federal government. This long march represents a veritable military prowess, albeit a political failure, as these rebellious men never managed to enlist the support of the peasants of the regions they crossed. All they managed to do was to be recognized as an autonomous political force, difficult to be destroyed. Even in the large cities, where they inspired admiration, above all among liberal professionals and employees, for the courage and bravery with which they challenged the traditional leaders, no political movement assured the multiplication of its forces in the challenging of the central power, which was engaged in preserving the interests of the agrarian elites.

L. C. Prestes and J. T. were, respectively, the sub-chief and the chief of the General Staff of these rebellious columns, which guaranteed them the fame of

warriors. J. Távora was taken prisoner in combat in 1925 in a state of the Northeast next to his region of birth and took advantage of his stint in prison in Rio to draft one of the rare testimonies of the time about the Brazilian revolution of 1924. He escaped in 1927, was captured anew and escaped once again in February, 1930, passing through the Northeast to prepare the revolution clandestinely. Chosen as commander chief of the uprising in the North of the country by G. Vargas and his collaborators, such as Osvaldo Aranha, he would approach J. A. de Almeida, then chief of the police forces of Paraíba, where the uprising of the young officers had great chances of working. This encounter thus corresponds to the approximation of young military men with dominated factions of the former agrarian elites to defeat by violence the central government. The success of their movement, called the Liberal Alliance, was as much the consequence of this alliance as it was of the international economic state of affairs which caused the political crises detailed above to coincide with the economic crisis due to the crash of the American stock market, which triggered an agricultural superproduction in the diverse plantation regions of Brazil.

It is worth taking into account that since the beginning of the 19th century there has been crises provoked by price fluctuation of the international markets for tropical products, but only affecting the regions of every single specific product, such as sugar, rubber, cocoa, coffee, etc. The 1930 crisis synchronized all crisis of large plantations from different regions, which caused a widespread agricultural overproduction; most different areas from the South to the North were undergoing the same problems facing the “international market” giving form to images proposed by some writers as the crisis of the “colonial economy”, turning interdependent all the sectors, is an effort that occurred after 1930 and it had been nominated such according of production chains. The economic staff recruited by Getúlio Vargas, during the course of twenty years when he was the head of the control government, composed by former polytechnic engineers and by former lawyers (cf. M.R. Loureiro, 1998), had a crucial role as the craftsman of a network of interdependent markets (cf. Joseph Love, 1996). A new bureaucracy linked to the federal government, recruited on the basis of academic qualifications and turned to the domains that so far never existed to the government’s actions – the ministry dedicated to education and health was only created in 1931, and opened a new range of recomposition to the descendents of agrarian elites threatened by the decline. The migration towards the major industrial centers attracted large contingency of young people from this social origin. The reorganization of the elite leaders to national level with the entry of factions who had been threatened by the economical decline was associated to the promotion of new paths of social reconversion, often linked to high school and college education and fast growth at that time. As Karl Polanyi (1944) pointed out to Great Britain, nationally interdependent markets presume an entire work of institutionalization of the economy. As a matter of fact, the Brazilian nation building since 1930 has had a strong eco-

conomic bias, but the main leaders didn't come from the new industrial entrepreneurs, nor from the commercial groups. Understanding the political career of the northerner political leaders coming up to the central power is even more interesting.

References

- Almeida, José Américo de (1989, first edition 1928): *A bagaceira*. Rio de Janeiro: José Olympio.
- Almeida, José Américo de (1978): *O ano de nego*. João Pessoa: Cia editora A União.
- Bourdieu, Pierre, (1993): "Esprits d'Etat. Genèse et structure du champ bureaucratique". In: *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*. 96-97. 49-62.
- Camargo, Aspasia et al. (ed.) (1984): *O Nordeste e a política. Diálogo com José Americo de Almeida*. Rio de Janeiro: Nova Fronteira.
- Eisenberg, Peter L. (1977): *Modernizacão sem mudança: a indústria açucareira em Pernambuco, 1840-1910*. Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Tera.
- Elias, Norbert (1990): *La dynamique de l'Occident*. Paris: Calman-Levy.
- Fausto, Boris (1978): *A revolução de 1930*. São Paulo: Brasiliense.
- Freyre, Gilberto (1933): *Casa Grande e senzala*. Rio de Janeiro: José Olympio.
- Garcia Jr. Afrânio (1989): *Libres et assujettis*. Paris: Ed. de la maison des sciences de l'homme.
- Garcia Jr. Afrânio (1993): "Les intellectuels et la conscience nationale au Brésil". In: *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*. 98. 20-33.
- Leal, Vitorio Nunes (1975): *Coronelismo, enxada e voto*. São Paulo: Alf-Omega.
- Levine, Robert (1978): *Pernambuco in the Brazilian federation (1889-1937)*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Lewin, Linda (1987): *Politics and parentela in Paraíba*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Love, Joseph (1971): *Rio Grande do Sul and Brazilian regionalism*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Love, Joseph (1980): *Sao Paulo in the Brazilian federation*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Love, Joseph (1996): *Crafting the third world*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Loureiro, Maria Rita (1998): "L'internationalisation des milieux dirigeants au Brésil". In: *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*. 121-122. 42-51.
- Miceli, Sergio (1981): *Les intellectuels au pouvoir au Brésil (1920-1945)*. Paris: Ed. de la maison des sciences de l'homme.
- Palmeira, Moacir (1976): "Casa e trabalho: nota sobre as relações sociais na plantação tradicional". Communication au 42 congrès international des américanistes, Paris, 2-9 September.
- Polanyi, Karl (1944): *The great transformation*. New York: Rinehart.
- Tavora, Joaquim (1975-1976): *Uma vida e muitas lutas, memorias*. Rio de Janeiro: Biblioteca do Exército Editora.
- Théry, Hervé (2000): "Le continent Brésil". In: *Hérodote*. No. 98. 9-27.
- Zweig, Stefan (1941): *Brésil terre d'avenir*. Paris: Albin Michel.